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A proposal for objectifying evaluation of moral and ethical fitness of teachers.

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17.

WORKSHOP REPORTS
SEMINAR 1
SELECTIVE ADMISSION AND RETENTION IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

I.

INTRODUCTION

After examining the studies that previous NCA Workshops had made in this area and after reviewing the practices in the several schools represented in the group and at the University of Minnesota, the members of the seminar decided to confine their efforts to a study of (1) moral and ethical evaluation, (2) selective admission and retention in physical education and (3) predictive criteria for teacher effectiveness.

II.

A PROPOSAL FOR OBJECTIFYING MORAL AND ETHICAL EVALUATION

The sub-committee on moral and ethical evaluation submits the following report as approved by the Seminar on Selective Admission and Retention in Professional Education only as an experiment. Surveys indicate (see the 11th Workshop Report) that moral and ethical fitness is a most important quality in a teacher, but there is no evidence of any considered plan for such evaluation. This report and its accompanying evaluation blank are submitted as a first step toward a valid instrument of evaluation.

The report by Ruth A. Stout, "A Study of Admission and Retention Practices in College and University Programs of Teacher Education" (University of Minnesota, 1957), and other reports indicate near unanimity regarding the desirability of moral and ethical fitness in teachers and teacher candidates. The committee endorses this concept, but wishes to note certain limitations in some of the implications.

First, moral and ethical fitness is not to be demanded of teachers exclusively, or even differentially in our culture. This fitness is a reasonable expectation of citizens in general. The behavior examples set by teachers may place them in a somewhat vulnerable position, but this is not equivalent to demanding teacher behavior which is above criticism. No person's behavior is completely acceptable to all people.

Second, acknowledgement of this responsibility should not be construed to mean complete conformity to the mores of a community or sub-culture. Morals and ethics are related to value systems, which are by their very nature not amenable to verification as to ultimate right or wrong. The latitude permitted teachers should be bounded by behavior which would operate clearly to the disadvantage of the individual or of mankind in general.

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Third, the committe affirms that objective measurement of this area is not possible at this time. Any evidence assembled should be viewed in the light of the subjectivity and personalities of those who proffer the evidence, opinion, and rating.

Fourth, it is justifiable and reasonable to provide the faculty of teacher-education institutions the opportunity of informing administrators and/ or prospective employers of serious breaches of widely-held moral and ethical values. The committee notes that this procedure is best used to call attention to that small proportion whose fitness is open to serious question. The procedure should not be employed in an effort to rank teachers or teacher candidates in any order of merit or fitness within the limits of acceptable value systems and their concommitant behavior.

The following sample of an evaluation report employs portions of evaluation sheets in use at

Nebraska State College, Kearney, Nebraska
Northern State Teachers College, Aberdeen, South Dakota
Moorhead State Teachers College, Moorhead, Minnesota
Nebraska State Teachers College, Peru, Nebraska
St. Cloud State Teachers College, St. Cloud, Minnesota

The form of the borrowed items has been changed in order to achieve unity of style. Some of the items are, however, new and untried. The duplication of meaning in some of the items is deliberate; it is an attempt to measure the effectiveness of various forms of phrasing.

The committee of the Workshop, recommends discretion in the use made of such reports. The primary source of information is expected to be the faculty members. However, it may be that institutions would seek such information also from appropriate non-teaching personnel. First, we repeat the warning that the reports are subjective evaluations and must be used as such. Second, the faculty members should be thoroughly oriented to the purposes and use of the instrument prior to inaugurating its use, and from time to time thereafter as warranted. In fact, the college may find it desirable to modify the sample report or to devise its own form of the instrument through the cooperation of its faculty, its students, and the personnel of the public schools in the area it serves. Third, we suggest that, if any report blank is used, it be required of every teacher for every student. (N. B., a teacher who has noted no lapses from the standard by a student need place only a check mark in one of the boxes in question VI. For most of the students the report will require very little of the teacher's time.) A partial return increases the danger of faulty conclusions. We believe, also, that if the report is used, it should be used in each term, semester or quarter, of the student's participation in the program of professional education. Cumulative profiles often reveal things not shown by spot checks. Fourth, we believe that the report

blanks and conclusions based upon them should be used only as partial evidence. Those students whose reports indicate serious deviations from generally accepted standards should be rejected only by the action of a committee after the advisor has consulted with the student. The advisor should, of course, be a member of the committee.

Finally, the workshop committee hopes that the evaluation report might become the basis for investigations which result in its validation or rejection. Perhaps a comparison of the later careers of students who had many lapses checked as compared with those who had very few items marked might indicate the value of the items as predictive devices.

SAMPLE REPORT

Name of student _____

Instructions: Check (, any item in which you have personally observed incidents during this current grading or marking period. Do not report rumor or hearsay. Check any item as often as you have observed incidents. Thus the number of checks will indicate frequency, which will be considered in the event the student is subject to committee action. Be as objective as possible.

I Honesty

A. Cheating on examinations _____

B. Lying _____

C. Plagiarism or using information sources without giving credit to rightful author _____

D. Seeking or using unwarranted assistance in his written work

_____

E. Stealing _____

F. Other (Explain in V) _____

II Personal

A. Improper use of alcoholic beverages _____

B. Sexual misbehavior _____

C. Improper recreational or leisure pursuits _____

D. Unwholesome influencing of others _____

E. Other (Explain in V) _____

III Self Discipline

A. Excessive physical pugnacity _____

B. Excessive verbal aggression _____

C. Excessive lethargy _____

D. Excessive emotionality _____

E. Public use of improper language _____

F. Other (Explain in V) _____